

months and the species did not occur again until December 8 when one was observed skulking in a brush pile below the cabin. One bird (presumably the same one) is still present on the island at present writing (January 12, 1919).

The instances given here are indications of the conditions limiting the range of the Carolina Wren, in one direction at least and show, too, how readily a species apparently common may be reduced or even exterminated in a given region in a very short period of time. In the case of the Carolina Wren the heavy blanket of snow covering the food supply would seem to be the direct cause of extermination rather than prolonged cold, as here at Washington these birds were able to survive a low temperature for a considerable period but were killed when deep snow covered the greater part of their normal feeding ground. It is to the comparatively few that are able to survive that we must look for the perpetuation of the species. The increase in numbers however, seems to be a slow process, as following their decrease in 1912, I found the species still comparatively rare near Lawrence, Kansas, in 1914, 1916 and as late as November, 1918.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

The Affinities of *Chamathlypis*.—As generic distinctions become more and more refined the need of a supergeneric group intermediate between the family or subfamily and the genus, corresponding approximately to the former genus, becomes increasingly evident.

In his great work on the 'Birds of North and Middle America' Mr. Ridgway has supplied this want in many families. In the Warblers (Mniotiltidae) the grouping does not appear to be so successful as in most cases. Not only is the old genus *Geothlypis* broken up into three genera but these are distributed in as many supergeneric groups. *Oporornis* is banded with *Dendroica* and its allies in the Dendroiceæ, while *Chamathlypis* is placed in the Ieteriæ.

We cannot help feeling that this arrangement is artificial, and that too much importance has been placed on the length of the wing-tip (easily modified by habits and migration), and insufficient weight given to coloration, nesting and even song.

Also, the distinctions are partially invalidated by exceptions. Thus the sections including *Geothlypis* and *Chamathlypis* are separated by differences in the length of the tail and form of the bill; but *Geothlypis nelsoni* agrees with *Chamathlypis* in having the tail longer than the wing. Again the Geothlypeæ are separated from the Dendroiceæ by having the rictal bristles obsolete and the wing-tip shorter, but in *Geothlypis æquinoctialis* and *G. cucullata*, at least, the rictal bristles are well-developed.

The particular point of criticism is in regard to the affinities of *Chamathlypis* which is distinguished from *Geothlypis* by its stouter bill, with strongly curved culmen, and its longer, graduated tail.

Mr. Ridgway expresses the opinion that while "this genus is very much like *Geothlypis* as to its general appearance" it is "quite distinct struc-

turally, in which respect it comes much nearer to *Icteria*." I have carefully tabulated the structural differences between these three genera, and the result to my mind unquestionably indicates a nearer relationship of *Chamæthlypis* with *Geothlypis*.

Sharpe (Hand-List of Birds) while recognizing *Chamæthlypis*, included in this genus two South American species of *Geothlypis*, *G. æquinoctialis* and *G. auricularis*. These two species and *G. cucullata* are intermediate between *Chamæthlypis* and the typical species of *Geothlypis* in coloration and in the form of the bill and have well developed rictal bristles as in *Chamæthlypis*. They do not, however, approach the latter genus in the length of the tail, as do certain Mexican species of *Geothlypis*, notably *G. nelsoni*.

While in Nicaragua in the spring of 1917 I had the opportunity of hearing the song of the 'Ground-chat' on several occasions. It is a highly musical warble resembling that of *Geothlypis semiflava bairdi* but even superior; the songs of both these species much excel that of *G. trichas*. The song of *Chamæthlypis* possesses nothing whatever of the eccentric qualities of the Yellow-breasted Chat's vocal performance.

In conclusion, the evidence of size, coloration, external structure and song, strongly indicate the near relationship of *Chamæthlypis* with *Geothlypis* and the more remote affinity of the former with *Icteria*. The first two genera are, in fact, practically connected by intermediate species.—W. DEW. MILLER, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*

Blue-winged Warbler Feeding a Young Field Sparrow.—On June 16, 1918, I was passing through a brushy area near Norwalk, Conn., when my attention was attracted by a Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) evidently much excited at my presence as though it had a nest or young in the vicinity. It carried a green caterpillar about with it, as though wishing to feed young, so I sat down to watch it. A Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) soon appeared and also manifested excitement at my presence. After some waiting the Blue-wing approached a certain point in the bushes so frequently, that I got suspicious and searched it, finding to my surprise a young Field Sparrow, evidently just out of the nest and unable to fly. I waited some time longer, hoping to find the young of the Blue-wing, and finally the latter got over its fear, and approached the young Field Sparrow, and fed it the caterpillar it had been carrying. The adult Field Sparrow remained near-by but would not go to the young bird.

This incident seems rather surprising, but I believe it is explained by supposing that the two species nested near each other; that the young of the Blue-wing were destroyed by a natural enemy just as they were about to leave the nest; and that the adult Blue-wing, finding a young Field Sparrow of about the same age nearby, fed it, perhaps not realizing that it was not its own offspring, and in any event, satisfying its natural instinct to feed and care for young at that time.—ARETAS A. SAUNDERS, *Norwalk, Conn.*